

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Date: November 1, 2004

To: Local Education Agencies, Institutions of Higher Education

From: Karl Wilson, Director, Special Education Services, Utah State Office of Education

CC: Regional Resource Centers

Subject: Request for Letters of Intent: Project Priorities for Improving Results for Students with Disabilities ages 3-21.

Important Dates.

Notification Date: November 1, 2004

Letter of Intent Due Date: December 1, 2004

Proposal Notification Date: December 17, 2004

Full Proposals Due Date: January 31, 2005

Project Notification: February 18, 2005

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UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION
Special Education Services

REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTENT & PROPOSALS

Project Priorities for Improving Results for Children with Disabilities

Notification Date: November 1, 2004

Letter of Intent Due Date: December 1, 2004

Proposal Notification Date: December 17, 2004

Full Proposals Due Date: January 31, 2005

Project Notification: February 18, 2005

Eligible Applicants: Projects may be proposed by Local Education Agencies and /or
Institutions of Higher Education.

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Executive Summary

The Special Education Section of the State Office of Education is requesting a letter of intent for proposed discretionary projects to assist in addressing statewide critical priorities in the upcoming year. These priorities are established using statewide needs assessment, feedback from special educators, parents, and University partners.

Enclosed is information related to the State Office of Education Comprehensive System of Personnel Development priorities for Fiscal Year 2005-2006.

A Comprehensive System of Personnel Development includes:

- a system-wide process for coordinating preservice and inservice training programs
- a system-wide method of identifying personnel needs
- an accountability tool for allocating and using resources
- a procedure for disseminating promising materials and practices derived from educational research and demonstration projects

and supports activities related to:

- recruitment and retention of personnel
- maintenance of data on personnel and professional development
- professional standards and certification
- alternative training models
- adequate supply of personnel
- personnel preparation and continuing education.

Priority 1 (Utah Agenda Strategy 1)

Develop, implement, and evaluate a system for ensuring recruitment, employment, and retention of highly qualified staff.

Utah has consistently experienced persistent shortages of special education teachers and related services personnel. Many Utah school districts continue to employ significant numbers of special education teachers on letters of authorization in hard-to-staff classrooms and schools. The pressures caused by these shortages is compounded by the No Child Left Behind Act which requires all states to have a fully credentialed teacher in every classroom by the 2005-06 school year.

The purpose of this priority is to support projects that will improve and/or develop programs that provide personnel preparation for special education teachers and related servers to enhance the supply of highly qualified and competent personnel to serve Utah's students with disabilities. Projects funded under this priority will offer programs through alternative routes to licensure or other non-traditional methods of preservice preparation.

To be considered for funding, all applicants must demonstrate the following:

- a) How their project will address personnel shortages and result in a larger number of highly qualified educators for students with disabilities in Utah.
- b) How their project will collaborate with Utah districts and the USOE and, as a result of that collaboration, build capacity.
- c) How their project aligns with Utah's Agenda for Empowering Students with Disabilities.
- d) How their project will use effective, research-based training practices and methods.
- e) How their project will train prospective educators to use scientifically validated interventions and instructional procedures with students with disabilities.
- f) How their project will improve outcomes for students with disabilities.
- g) How their project will use other funding sources and in-kind resources to leverage state funds.
- h) How project results can be disseminated statewide.

Anticipated Number of Awards 2005-2006

Priority 1: personnel preparation: 10-12 projects. Total amount available is approximately \$975,000

Priority 2: Access to the General Curriculum/Collaboration/AYP

Preliminary analysis of the May 2004 assessment results indicates that many of Utah's students with disabilities did not achieve adequate yearly progress. This has underscored the need for innovative, proactive instruction and interventions in delivery models that leads to student success in literacy, numeracy, and science.

In preparing students with disabilities to participate in state assessments, districts must be able to align curriculum and instruction for all students with academic content standards, facilitate the development of effective interventions to enable students to meet these high standards, become proficient in using data to drive educational decisions at all levels, and deliver professional development focused on targeted improvement strategies.

Discretionary projects under this program priority must show evidence of student achievement, how achievement will be monitored, and how evidence of achievement will be documented. The project funds are to assist districts, in collaboration with an Institute of Higher Education (IHE), to close the achievement gap of students with disabilities in standards-based reform.

To be considered for funding, all applicants must demonstrate the following:

- a) How their project will improve outcomes for students with disabilities.
- b) How their project will collaborate with Utah Institutions of Higher Education and the USOE and, as a result of that collaboration, build capacity.
- c) How their project aligns with Utah's Agenda for Empowering Students with Disabilities.
- d) How their project will use effective, research-based training practices and methods.
- e) How their project will train educators to use scientifically validated interventions and instructional procedures with students with disabilities.
- f) How their project will use other funding sources and in-kind resources to leverage state funds.

Anticipated Number of Awards 2005-2006

Priority 2: access to the general curriculum: 3-5 Project Grants, Range =\$30-50,000.
Total amount available is \$100,000.

Priority 3: Improving Literacy for Students with Disabilities

In response to requests from special educators, parents, and other stakeholders, the Utah State Office of Education Special Education Services Unit formed a Literacy Task Force to address information about reading programs that reflect scientifically based research. In July 2004 a draft Technical Assistance Document was prepared to provide information on the following components:

- A brief explanation of the Three-Tiered Model for instruction and intervention described in the Utah K-3 Literacy Framework;
- Elements of effective reading instruction;
- A review of assessments; and
- A review of supplemental and intensive reading programs.

Discretionary projects under this program priority must show evidence of student achievement in the area of reading/literacy, how achievement will be monitored, and how evidence of achievement will be documented. The project funds are to assist districts in implementing scientifically based reading programs. .

To be considered for funding, all applicants must demonstrate the following:

- a) How their project will improve literacy for students with disabilities.
- b) How their project will collaborate with Utah Institutions of Higher Education and the USOE and, as a result of that collaboration, build capacity.
- c) How their project aligns with Utah's Agenda for Empowering Students with Disabilities.
- d) How their project will use effective, research-based training practices and methods.
- e) How their project will train educators to use scientifically validated interventions and instructional procedures with students with disabilities.
- f) How their project will use other funding sources and in-kind resources to leverage state funds.

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Anticipated Number of Awards 2005-2006

Priority 3: improving literacy for students with disabilities: 3-5 Project Grants, Range = \$10,000-20,000. Total amount available is \$60,000

Modified RFP Process

Step 1: One page “letter of intent” indicating interest & topic due by 5 PM December 1, 2004. Letters must include the following and be limited to **one page** in length for each proposed project. Districts/IHE submitting more than one proposed project are encouraged to submit a single, combined letter listing all proposed projects.

- Name and address of the district/IHE, along with the name and phone number of a contact person.
- An abstract of the proposed project including (1) the personnel need(s) being addressed, (2) proposed audience & partners, (3) nature and extent of project activities, (4) description of outcomes, (5) estimated costs.

Send to:

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Step 2: After receiving invitation, submit full application (due January 31, 2005).
Panel review /project selection (February 18, 2005).

Grants will be funded for the period of July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006. Grantees will be notified on or before March 1, 2005 of the receipt of an award.

Mission Statement

As a community we have united to develop a plan to meet the needs of students with disabilities. We charge the Special Education Section of the Utah State Office of Education, along with families and other agencies, to implement this vision for the future - The Utah Agenda for Empowering Each Student with Disabilities.

Our mission is to empower each student with disabilities to become a caring, competent, and contributing member of an integrated, diverse, and changing society. This will be accomplished through the provision of resources, sharing of information, and coordination of services that enhance personal capability and quality of life.

Objectives

- Each year all students with disabilities will achieve "proficient" on either the grade level Utah Criterion Referenced Tests (CRTs) or Utah's Alternate Assessment (UAA).
- All students with disabilities will earn a diploma or certificate of completion by age 22, and successfully transition into adult life.
- All students with disabilities will demonstrate age appropriate social behavior.
- The Utah State Office of Education will maintain systems of family and community involvement, funding, policies and procedures, and personnel resources that support positive student outcomes.

Strategies

We will:

1. Develop, implement, and evaluate a system for ensuring recruitment, employment, and retention of highly qualified staff.
2. Develop, implement, and evaluate an effective comprehensive system of personnel development, to ensure parent participation and the use of validated instruction, curriculum, and interventions.
3. Achieve adequate and equitable funding necessary for each student's appropriate educational services while maintaining a unified multiagency advocacy approach.
4. Infuse the Utah Agenda into systems change initiatives.
5. Develop and implement a plan for students with disabilities to achieve access to the general curriculum in a setting with students who are not disabled to the maximum extent appropriate.
6. Develop and implement a plan to ensure that each student with disabilities demonstrates adequate annual progress toward social competencies.
7. Develop and implement a process to ensure that district and state curricula and assessments include functional skills.
8. Develop and implement a plan to simplify regulatory requirements, decrease paperwork, and increase flexibility to focus on student outcomes.
9. Strengthen a system of multiagency services through collaboration, communication, and coordination to achieve seamless services and effective transitions. (Birth-22)
10. Achieve coordination of general and special education services at the state, local and classroom level.